

Wednesday, February 15, 2023

The second regular meeting of February, 2023 of the Pike County Commissioners was called to order by Commissioner Schmalzle at 11:00 a.m. at the Pike County Administration Building, followed by the "Pledge of Allegiance" to the flag.

PRESENT: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron; Chief Clerk Gromalski; and Solicitor Farley.

Public Comments/Questions concerning today's agenda –

A meeting member said you can't access the meeting from last week. Chief Clerk Krista Gromalski said the video didn't function last time, there was an issue so there is no live stream from last week. The meeting attendee asked if this meeting is being live-streamed? Chief Clerk Gromalski answered yes.

Motion to recess the Commissioners' Meeting to hold a Retirement Board Meeting. A Retirement Board Meeting was held. Motion to adjourn the Retirement Board Meeting and reconvene the Commissioners' Meeting.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the February 15, 2023, Agenda.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the February 1, 2023, Meeting Minutes.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the February 8, 2023, Conference Minutes.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve payment from the **GENERAL FUNDS** in the amount of **\$185,590.16**;

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve exonerations as presented by Gina Rios, Tax Claim Bureau Director, for a property in Dingman Township with Control No. 03-0-016769.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

PERSONNEL

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to hire **KRISTINA BRADLEY** as Cleaner for the Training Center, for less than 1,000 hours per year, effective February 27, 2023.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to hire **KENNETH BLAIR** as full-time Meal Transporter in the Area Agency on Aging, for a 35-hour work week, effective March 6, 2023, pending drug test results, with benefits after 90 days.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

Motion to recess the Commissioners Meeting to hold a Salary Board Meeting.

A Salary Board Meeting was held.

Motion to adjourn the Salary Board Meeting and reconvene the Commissioners Meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to open bids received for the Pike County Jail Complex Well #3 Drilling and Development Project.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

Solicitor Farley announced there are no bids. Commissioner Osterberg said this is fourth time we put this out to bid and have no bidders. We sent this out to 35 Contractors, and no one bid.

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the following Human Services Payment Vouchers, on behalf of the Office of Human Services: Human Services Development Fund in the amount of \$22,705.94; Emergency Rental Assistance Program 2.0 in the amount of \$70,776.38; and COVID 19 County Relief Fund in the amount of \$857.39.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the Pike County Home Program Payment Voucher in the amount of \$3,600.00, payable to Ray Evans, on behalf of the Office of Human Services.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the Pike County Home Program Payment Voucher in the amount of \$939.85, payable to Ray Evans, on behalf of the Office of Human Services.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to approve the Affordable Housing Payment Voucher in the amount of \$13,318.50, payable to Scott Eyler, on behalf of the Office of Human Services.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to authorize the Chairman to execute Pike County Rental Assistance Contract #50, on behalf of the Office of Human Services.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to authorize the Chairman to execute Pike County Rental Assistance Contract #51, on behalf of the Office of Human Services.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to authorize the Chairman to execute Pike County Rental Assistance Contract #61, on behalf of the Office of Human Services.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to authorize the Chairman to execute the Project Fund Agreement for the Pike County Medical Foundation of Greater Pike Community Foundation

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

Commissioner Schmalzle announced that there is good news. After a long, long process, we spoke at length with Northwell this week and with the property owner at Dingmans and the contract/lease agreement is in place. It is Northwell's plan to make the improvements to that property after going through Delaware Township Zoning and that should be at the next meeting and there are about \$100K interior work that the owner will do in preparation for this because of the build out. It is their plan that they will be open for business in the Summer of 2023. Hard pressed to believe because we've been working at this for so long, but that is what they are saying and that is what the public announcement is going to be. They also plan to open this coming Summer 2023, a second location up in the Route 507 corridor. There are three different buildings that we're looking at and therefore helping them to secure. It is their intention that they will open up there this Summer too. I think that is a little aggressive, knowing how long things take, but the good news is they're coming and they're coming quickly. Other information is that they're working with another Pennsylvania health care provider to partner with these types of things, and we had a significant conversation with them about bring 24/7 hospital emergency room services to Pike County and that conversation is ongoing and moving positively. That is why we are announcing the formation of a Medical Foundation – the County is going to contribute some seed money to that Foundation. We will be appointing an Executive Board for the purposes of not only managing that Foundation through the Greater Pike Foundation, but also for raising money. It is my entrepreneurial spirit that we would like to take the first \$2M and grow that into a \$10M fund that will help the provider in building a facility here in Pike County in an area that we currently own land, in Blooming Grove, and have sewer and water. We are going to offer them the land and infrastructure and the help of the Foundation to get that off to make this a viable kick off. Then we will start another Foundation that will help them be viable into the future. I think you all know we have gone to every medical provider in the northeast to try to get them to come to Pike County. At no time in the past have they come back to us and say they can do a business plan that was viable. At that time, we realized that we need to step up to the plate, provide them with a path to success and we're pleased to report the progress and we will continue on this until it is all in place. Opening in Dingmans is they're leasing 5K square feet of space, 3K square feet of the space is going to be used for what they're calling an urgent care or immediate care facility. The other 2K square feet will be developed into supporting services. I believe it will be imaging and things like that they'll be doing after they open the urgent care. It's going to be the same type of facility in the Lake Region (507 corridor).

Commissioner Osterberg added this is just a continuation of our efforts to provide medical services to this County. This has been something that since I've been in office that we've been working on. What's happening now is, from all the hard work, things are going to be opening up. This \$2M should be seed money that we're going to ask the community to become a part of through this Foundation. This could easily turn into \$10M, as Ron said. We've spoken to State and Federal Reps and other Foundations how we can take this money into a larger fund. If we can do this, I can see this being accomplished within the next 5 years where there will be some sort of 24/7 facility in this County. Something that is direly needed, something that's never been here for as long as this County has been here. We're excited about doing this and we're going to start to name people and sit on the Foundation. We are grateful for Greater Pike Foundation for helping us through this because they are the vehicle that will help us develop this Foundation.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to authorize the Chairman to execute the 2022/2023 CAPP Grant-In-Aid Award Notification, on behalf of the Probation Office.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to execute the Certification Statement for the 1st Quarter FY 22-23 Act 148 invoice for Pike County, on behalf of Children and Youth Services.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to execute the TransUnion Master Agreement for Consumer Reporting and Ancillary Services, between Trans Union LLC, and the County of Pike, on behalf of Children and Youth Services – Service Access and Management for Pike County.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to close the Hazard Mitigation Plan Bank Account and transfer the remaining funds of \$1.07 to the General Fund Account.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted 'aye'. Motion carried.

MOTION: by Commissioner Waldron and seconded by Commissioner Schmalzle, to authorize the Chief Clerk to execute the Diesel and/or Gasoline – “Federal Exemption Certificate”, on behalf of the Correctional Facility.

VOTE: Commissioners Osterberg, Schmalzle and Waldron voted ‘aye’. Motion carried.

MISCELLANEOUS

- PennState Extension February Calendar of Events

PRESS & PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS/ADJOURNMENT

Meeting attendee Patty Coombs asked about the Medical Foundation, are you giving them that property? Commissioner Osterberg responded there would be a long-term lease on it. This will be a non-profit, this money is allocated not for profit. Most hospitals are non-profit organizations.

Reporter Meghan Carlson asked if Northwell is a Pennsylvania medical provider? Commissioner Osterberg answered Northwell is a medical provider out of New York State. Commissioner Waldron added they are the fifth largest medical provider in the United States. I didn’t know that until January when we first met with them. They employ over 80K people in the State of New York, and they are based around the Metropolitan New York area and into Westchester County and out into Long Island. They came to us and said that because some of them have summer homes in this area that they saw a need for medical services. They thought it might make sense to try and do that probably because a lot of their customers, clients, come up from New York to visit and stay in Pike County. It was a great opportunity. These guys have been working on this before I arrived. Fortunately, Northwell contacted us at the end of 2021 and said we’d like to talk to you about this and that’s what developed. The good news is they’re also smart enough to partner with another well-established medical provider in Pennsylvania to make it easier for them to deal with licensing and insurance issues as well as to work on the bigger plan of the 24/7 emergency mini hospital.

Reporter Meghan Carlson then asked who they partnered with? Commissioner Waldron replied they are talking to an entity; we don’t want to commit them. We’ve talked to that hospital system as well and they’ve talked to us and said good, we’d like to see if we can make this work, but they don’t want to make to firm of a commitment until they know the numbers work. It’s one of the reasons why we’re incentivizing it with hopefully \$10M and a property with sewer and water in a place that usually doesn’t have sewer and water – that’s worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. We’re not just going to give it to them and say let’s see whether you develop it, it would be absolutely tied into their delivering if you will, what we’re looking for. Commissioner Osterberg added there will be agreements in place.

Reporter Preston Ehler asked for some clarification, this is going into the shopping center up in Dingmans? Commissioner Osterberg said the Urgent Care is – correct, by the new Weis Market in Delaware Township. Commissioner Waldron said there is a shell there, concrete block walls with nothing inside it, that’s what they’re going to be occupying. Not all, but a good part of it.

Reporter Preston Ehler asked about the other one, where is that going in the Lake Region (Route 507 corridor)? Commissioner Osterberg answered there are three different facilities that are being eyed. Commissioner Schmalzle said there are three buildings all within about a mile of the intersection of Route 6 and Route 507. Commissioner Waldron said one is down Route 6 closer to Hawley, but they would all be in Palmyra Township in Pike County.

Reporter Preston Ehler asked if you guys have been working on this for a while now, this was initially announced that this was coming to fruition back in November. On a personal level, can you guys give me your thoughts on how this feels? It sounds like this is just about ‘shovel-ready’. You’re talking about getting this done by like July. How does this feel? Commissioner Osterberg replied doing this job, these are the types of things that we work hard at, providing these services to the rest of us. It feels really good because this is something that, as I’ve told you I’ve been here for a number of years, twelve years now, and this has been on our front burner. Prior to that, me and Mike Sullivan, when I was here without these two gentlemen, me and him (Mike Sullivan of EDA) visited many medical services also. This type of facility, this type of business that comes into our community, checks a lot of boxes. It cures our medical issues, it takes care of transportation issues downstairs with Transportation – we’re taking senior citizens long distances for treatments, this is this beginning of closing that gap. It helps address the EMS issues. A 24/7 facility in this community could render our EMS much more structurally adequate and efficient. Right now, by us putting that money into the EMS, we’re producing in some cases from 27 minutes wait for an ambulance down to 7 minutes. Now, what we’ve done is put this into place it will take that time that they’re going to a hospital. Right now, when an ambulance takes you someplace in the center part of the County, you can confirm this with EMS drivers, takes 2-3 hours out of service. If we have a facility on 739, that puts them back into service in a ½ hour. Where you can see this proven in Matamoras and the Milford region, with Bon Secours being so close, those ambulances are back in service almost immediately. Now, we’ve moved into the 21st century, people expect better medical services and bringing this closer to everybody is going to be a benefit for every single resident in this County. I know it’s on 739, but when you look at the Blooming Grove area and that area, 55% of the population reside there. We’re covered down here, I live here – Port Jervis (New York) is 6 miles away. Newton (New Jersey) is not very far away. Lehman they’re still a ½ hour away. This will be a little closer for the people in Lehman, we need to pick the location for this. The advantage of having this on the Blooming Grove sight is we own the property. We have the infrastructure. It would take forever to put something in place, like a central sewage system. This is shovel-ready, just a matter of us now to build this \$2M into a larger fund.

Commissioner Waldron added that as far as having the urgent care up in the Lake Region area to service particularly Greene Township, Lackawaxen and Palmyra and even Blooming Grove, that’s a great opportunity. There are some if you go up to Honesdale, but if you’re coming from Greentown to Honesdale that’s a long drive especially if you’re in dire medical circumstances. We’re really fortunate that we were able to make this work with Northwell because Northwell has told us, we said that we had this \$2M that was set aside from Federal money that came down for medical services, well maybe it could

be used for the urgent care, they said no, hold on to that for your bigger project because we can afford to lose a \$1M a year if we have to. They're realistic that they're not going to automatically be doing huge business the first few months or year or two. However, they're a multibillion-dollar revenue, although they're a non-profit, they have a lot of money, so they have the resources to make this work without hoping it works. Unfortunately, in the past we had a little bit of that in this area, where somebody tries to make it work and it doesn't so that walk away. We don't see that happening here, there's no guarantees, but it's certainly a better opportunity to make it work.

Reporter Preston Ehler said Ron (Commissioner Schmalzle), this has been a big deal for you because you said this has been your thing, you're focused on getting this, to get medical businesses up here to help keep people staying in Pike County instead of leaving. Commissioner Schmalzle said this checks so many boxes for us and when I got involved here I became a little disappointed as a member of the Board of Wayne Memorial Hospital, for the sole purpose of making sure we can bring some kind of services in and they did some in Lords Valley, I resigned from that Board in the past month because of the conflict. I have an everyday conversation with these other medical providers, and I had a conflict of interest, so I did do that, but for me this is a number one priority. It's the biggest weakness that I have. It also creates employment opportunities within the County away from my other passion which is tourism. The tourism industry is dominant in our County, but we need to have other types of employment. If you go to Wayne County, the largest employer is Wayne Memorial Hospital. If you go to most communities, it is probably the health care systems. In our County, the largest employer is Woodloch Pines and we hope to bring other jobs with the medical services into the County. For me, it checks all the boxes and I'm going to work on this until I can't stand it anymore, but this has been a long time coming.

Meeting attendee Matt Contreras asked where the seed money is actually coming from? Specifically, what tier of the COVID money that you received? Commissioner Osterberg answered it was the American Recovery Funds. He then asked how much money of that is left currently? Commissioner Osterberg answered we have used all of it – we took care of non-profits with about \$200K and put some to help offset our costs here in the County, Robb (Director of Human Services Ruiz) is here and helped us. Then he asked there is not \$10M in there currently, it's just \$2M left? Commissioner Osterberg answered correct. Mr. Contreras asked who is the Chairman of the Pike County Medical Foundation? Commissioner Osterberg answered we haven't set this yet, the creation of signing the agreement and everything. Mr. Contreras asked when are you planning to appoint the Chairman? Commissioner Osterberg answered in the near future, we're identifying individuals.

Matt Contreras said my other comment would be is, of course, this is the beginning of the Primary Election season, my question for the Commissioners is that I notice that your YouTube is basically erased. All of the previous Commissioners' meetings as well as the County pages for the minutes and agenda from previous meetings are erased, do we have to do a Right To Know Request? Chief Clerk Krista Gromalski answered that the meetings and all of the agenda are up for the current year, the 2022 minutes and agenda were taken down – they are still available if you would like them. Mr. Contreras said so the only way they're available is to make a Right To Know Request, correct me if I'm wrong. Chief Clerk Gromalski answered you can just come into the office to ask for them. Mr. Contreras said so the public can't go on the website and just view the minutes? Chief Clerk Gromalski answered for this year, yes, for last year no. Mr. Contreras said you can go to the DV (Delaware Valley) School District website and see the minutes and agenda items for the past 10 or 12 years, it's pretty comprehensive. I'm wondering since the County budget in less than 4 years has gone up \$8M and you raise taxes 1.5 mils, what is the community getting for their money? The School Board (website) you're able to see minutes and agenda items and record, but a citizen cannot go on the County website and extract minutes and agenda from previous minutes? It just so happens to be during the course of an election season. Chief Clerk Gromalski said we typically remove the previous year's agenda and minutes. We do have them available, you can come into the office and get them if you like. It is at the discretion of the Board, but regarding the YouTube, it is live-streamed for the meeting, but once the minutes are approved, that becomes the record of the meeting rather than the YouTube. We do remove the videos. Matt Contreras asked why it is the County's position that you have to remove the YouTube? There is no law that says you must remove the YouTube. Solicitor Farley answered but we always just at that point the actual record is the minutes, so we keep the minutes, but I didn't know this first part was done, I think we should reevaluate removing the YouTube video.

Mat Contreras asked who made the decision to remove the minutes and agenda and who made the decision to remove the YouTube videos? Chief Clerk Gromalski answered she made the decision to remove the minutes and agenda of the previous year, that has been our standard practice that we've done every year since I've been doing the website. He then asked from what directive did you get that? Whose determination was it that you remove those minutes? Solicitor Farley answered I think that from the beginning, nobody really thought about it. As far as YouTube, you can blame me, after the minutes are official the video comes off. Then he asked so it's the Commissioners' position that you're going to just continue to remove the YouTube meeting from the public and also will there be a formal way for the public, like they can at DVSD for instance, access the minutes. Commissioner Osterberg answered we'll put the minutes back up. It was a procedure that was done for years to remove the minutes. Commissioner Waldron said it sounds like this procedure was done for years. Commissioner Waldron added it never came up before, there is no reason why they can't stay up there. Commissioner Schmalzle added that he doesn't think it's a problem to put the YouTube (meeting video) up there with a disclaimer that 'they are not the official minutes' of the meeting. With your advice, we're happy to do that. Mr. Contreras said the other comment I would say is that a lot of people in the community are not able to make this 11:00 AM meeting, so that's the only way that you can see what actually occurs at the meeting rather than just read the minutes. In this digital world, unless YouTube is restricting you or the County's paying money, certainly for the amount of money that we're paying for other things, we can be as good as the School Board in terms of accessing information from the public – we're being transparent right? That's what the goal is – this is transparency correct?

Meeting attendee Gina Mancado said she has a question, so you're putting up two urgent cares and a hospital? Commissioner Osterberg answered the hospital would be an emergency center that's 24/7, the urgent care is not 24/7. Do we really have a need for two urgent cares and a hospital in our area? Commissioner Schmalzle responded 100% - we've done study after study on this including Northwell's extensive study on it and there are 67 counties in Pennsylvania and we're the only one without either. We don't have either and we're the fastest growing County. Commissioner Waldron said for obvious reasons, I represented Palmyra Township and Tafton is a paid ambulance service that's been in existence for a number of

years, when they pick up someone and have to take them to a hospital, the average time they're out on the call is 1 ½ to 2 hours whether they go to Wayne Memorial Hospital or Scranton. With a mini emergency center in Blooming Grove, that time will go down to ½ hour. The problem that is obvious is if you're out for 2 hours and another call comes in, who is covering it? Quite frankly because of what the prior Commissioners and these guys (Commissioners Osterberg and Schmalzle) did, and my predecessor (former Commissioner Steve Guccini), the money that's been infused into the ambulance companies has helped that but it still doesn't shorten that time frame. If you have 2 ambulances it does help because you can get a second one out when something comes in during that 2 hour gap. This will make it so much better, that's why it's really needed. An urgent care can handle some medical emergencies, but not the more serious ones. The urgent care is an everyday issue, the emergency room is when things get bad. Commissioner Schmalzle added that the problem with having a hospital without urgent care is that you flood your emergency room with bumps and bruises and sniffles. The problem with having an urgent care without a hospital is an ambulance can't go to an urgent care. The two in communities are combined for that reason, because they are 2 different services that they provide. A lot of things can be taken care of with an urgent care, a lot of things, but if it's an emergency, if it's after hours you need a hospital. In my experience that I had at Wayne Memorial, they opened urgent cares to relieve the pressure on their emergency room. If you go down to Newton (Memorial Hospital), New Jersey, you see an urgent care at the doorstep of the emergency room – that's for the exact same reason.

Meeting attendee Matt Contreras said he has spoken to some of the ambulance companies and their contention is that an ambulance or cooperative is really what the County should have done and currently the BLS (Basic Life Support) and ALS (Advanced Life Support) Services are not as good as it could be. This doesn't happen in a bubble, Matt (Commissioner Osterberg) you've been here for 8 years and Ron (Commissioner Schmalzle) you've been here for 4 years and Tony (Commissioner Waldron) has only been here a couple of years, this is not just a problem that happens – why haven't we tried to move toward a cooperative? I understand the Townships are independent – you have not lobbied for something that would be more comprehensive we don't need a hospital to have better ambulance services here. Commissioner Schmalzle responded you've been talking to the Blooming Grove people? Mr. Contreras answered no, actually I've been talking to more than just Blooming Grove people. Commissioner Schmalzle said we went to meetings over a long period of time to come up with a solution and one of the solutions was something similar to what you're talking about and proposed by Nick (Mazza) from Blooming Grove. No one was interested in doing it with them and that's recorded in minutes at the meetings that they've had and we were at the meetings to witness that. That probably is a better solution in the long run, but it's not something we can put in place for what we thought was a very serious and urgent problem and the fastest way out of it we believe is what we accomplished. We hear back from nearly all of them, we have the records through Tim (Director Knapp of Pike County EMA) and everybody out there is that it's been a very positive experience.

Meeting attendee Matt Contreras said correct me if I'm wrong, but the money that you sent to all the Townships? Commissioner Osterberg answered only if they request it and only if they post the same amount. Mr. Contreras continued, some of the Townships, however, do not have full ambulatory care but have received this money, correct? Commissioner Schmalzle answered that's correct. Mr. Contreras continued, I don't want to disparage Nick (Mazza), I think he's a fair man, he's good for the County, haven't the Commissioners appointed him Chair to some investigative group? Commissioner Schmalzle replied I think he does a great job, we felt it needed to be faster and maybe what he was proposing can happen over time. Commissioner Waldron added that I know there was an effort made by Matt (Commissioner Osterberg) and Steve (former Commissioner Guccini) to work at a higher level and see if the County could have more of an ability, not to run it, but to coordinate it because it's kind of what they did with the money. Unfortunately, about half of the County Association thought it was a great idea and the other half didn't. Commissioner Osterberg added that Senator Lisa Baker has legislation to form an authority that will allow counties to work together. We have no authority to be in the ambulance business. That is all on the Townships' responsibilities. We felt there are Townships that need assistance with funding to help pay staffing and that is what our money is used for. Some of them are not 24 hours. We have smaller Municipalities that cannot generate enough money, but they need ambulance services to take the pressure off of the larger Townships that do have the money and are able to have 24 hour service. Milford has a 12-hour service that takes pressure off of Dingman Township, who have two 24 hour ambulances. Westfall is getting ready to put one in and Port Jervis (New York) is contracted through to Matamoras. It is a whole County-wide issue where we need to make sure there's enough ambulances. Mr. Contreras then said an ambulance might not be a County issue per se, because it's a Township problem, however being a leader and being a Commissioner is building consensus.

Reporter Preston Ehler asked what was the wait time for an ambulance before you put in the program from last year? Commissioner Osterberg answered in the area of Shohola it was up to 24 to 30 minutes before an ambulance showed up at your door, we have reduced that to 7 (minutes).

Mr. Contreras said I saw Tony (Commissioner Waldron) at the Delaware Township meeting regarding the Shawnee-Walker transmission line in the middle of the County, do you have any comments about that? Commissioner Osterberg answered the right of way is already there. Commissioner Waldron said they are using an existing right of way because that is the easiest way for them to establish that whether we like that or not. Those rights of way were put in in the 1950's and 1960's and they're using that transmission corridor because they don't have to say we have to work with these property owners to acquire. Having said that, there are ways to get it done that don't have to adversely impact people anymore and there are lots of people that don't even know they have a right of way. Mr. Contreras continued so the meeting we were at and Matt (Commissioner Osterberg) and Ron (Commissioner Schmalzle) were not at, Mr. Farley asked if the company could submit those rights of way to the County and Township, have you received that? Have you gone through them? Solicitor Farley said the Township received them, Delaware Township is looking to match them up. I don't know if it was forwarded to the County yet. Unfortunately, of all the property, I think there are only 9 properties that are at issue, they don't have right of ways and only 5 of them are private individuals. That means the company has to work out with those 5 people, I think 4 of those are public entities. Commissioner Waldron added that he asked Mr. Turner, who is a representative and a nice guy, but unfortunately doesn't have much information, to provide those more detailed maps to show people's locations. For example, we found afterwards that the line goes through Camp Akenac, there's an extreme corner of it away from all of the facilities used by the public, but I said you know you should bring them to County Planning, that would be a great way of

disseminating that kind of information. This line is going to go through 5 Townships. He assured me he would. We had some contact with First Energy after that and I reminded them that we asked for that. I don't know if it's been delivered yet since that meeting. Commissioner Waldron said we do not have jurisdiction over that, per se, people asked about the earlier part of the plan as I understand it, some of that was a problem with getting rights of way to land that are protected by government or Conservation easements. I think that complicated things and they said we'll use the corridor that we already have access to. Commissioner Osterberg added that although they (Commissioners Osterberg and Schmalzle) were not at that meeting, they had a meeting with First Energy when they returned and we reviewed all of this and asked them for the maps and asked them what the purpose of this was. The purpose is, when you talk to the people in Lehman Township, particularly the Supervisors, they want to see this because of resiliency and redundancy. Our question to them was when they come out to Route 6 and go over to the Walker Station, is there a way for them to make a right hand turn and bring some redundancy to this area of Pike County? Whether you know it or not the electricity here has only one source of electricity, it comes from New York State – we have no connection to the Pennsylvania grid. It is kind of a safety issue, it's a sad issue because we will pay in the future more prices here for electricity. What impact is this going to have on Dingman, Delaware, Lehman Township? They do have to get some new right of ways, but if you're going to do this, is there a way for them to assist the 2,500 residents here who sit on this island away from every other grid of Pennsylvania and it was a good conversation and they're going to get back to us.

THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE PIKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 2023, AT 11:00 A.M. IN THE PIKE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING.